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Time May Be Right For Independent

But Early Indications Reveal the Man May Be Billionaire Gun Grabbing Mayor

Is billionaire Mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg making a play for the White House? In this week's edition, AFP correspondent Michael Collins Piper takes a hard look at Bloomberg's recent party switch and the chatter that is buzzing around. Is this the beginning of the end of America's two-party system?

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Elite Opinion Makers Touting Bloomberg For Independent Presidential Candidate

By Michael Collins Piper

WHETHER YOU LIKE WHAT HE HAS to say or not, the fact is that when veteran *Washington Post* columnist David Broder talks, people listen. Washington insiders know that when Broder puts forth an opinion, it's one that represents the thinking within the higher circles of the ruling establishment in this country.

That's why when, on June 23, Broder suggested in *The Washington Post*—in a column that has received nationwide syndicated distribution—that an independent presidential campaign by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg might be good for the country, many people who would otherwise reject a third party candidate suddenly sat up and realized that elite circles in this country might be ready to consider the possibility of putting Bloomberg in the White House in 2008.

Broder—a tried-and-true and much-trusted establishment voice, a longtime member of the powerful Council on Foreign Relations—has always been hostile to third party and independent candidates. Broder has consistently cast third party and independent candidates as no more than "demagogues," "snake oil salesmen," "hatemongers" and "rabble-rousers" (or words to that effect).

Yet, in recent weeks Broder has been singing a different tune, now suggesting that both of the major parties— Democratic and Republican alike—are, in Broder's words, "trending toward extreme positions" that, he said, "would open the door to an independent or third party challenge in 2008 aimed at the millions of voters in the center."

Now, with his most recent offering on the potential candidacy by Bloomberg, Broder has gone so far as to draw a strong difference between previous "other" candidates and Bloomberg, saying that "if he runs, he is not just a nuisance or distraction." Broder added:

> Unlike Ralph Nader, Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot, the last three significant independents to run, and who had not spent a day in elective office, Bloomberg has solid governing experience and a commendable record of innovation and accomplishment in New York. He has the personal wealth to finance a campaign, and people on his staff eager to run one. If he decides to go, he would add to the mix—not distort or diminish it.

Those readers, who do not understand how influential Broder's opinions are, will dismiss what Broder has to say as "just one man's opinion," but the truth is that Broder's commentary has been a consistent bellwether of elite opinion in this country.

And Broder is not the only influential media voice making noises about how much Bloomberg would contribute to the country. No less than Donna Brazile, one of the most respected figures in Democratic Party circles (and the former campaign manager for Al Gore's failed presidential candidacy in 2000), has trumpeted her enthusiasm for the billionaire New York mayor. In a column in the neo-conservative *Washington Times* on June 25, Brazile crowed:

> Mr. Bloomberg has a lot to offer the country. He can be the candidate to help bridge the partisan divide, or force Congress to stop butting heads and do something for a change.

In the wake of Broder's hardly veiled endorsement of a Bloomberg campaign, a stalwart Democrat such as Miss Brazile would lend her voice to the swirling media-generated "enthusiasm" for an independent campaign by Bloomberg, Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton might begin having many sleepless nights.

Although many grassroots Democrats (and Republicans who hate Bill and Hillary Clinton with a passion) continue to view Hillary as the favorite choice of the so-called "liberal establishment," the truth is that Hillary (even in her adopted home state of New York) has never really been a favorite of the powers-that-be.

In 2000, when Mrs. Clinton first ran for the Senate against Republican Congressman Rick Lazio, many Democratic Party fundraisers in the Jewish community who had previously raised millions for New York Democratic Sen. Charles Schumer actually lent their support to Lazio rather than Mrs. Clinton. And in the general election, when Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore was carrying 80% of the critical Jewish vote, Hillary was barely winning a majority of that same vote, contrary to what many uninformed observers might have expected.

So now that Bloomberg may be adding yet a third "New York offering" in a race that could be a three-way contest between New York Republican Rudy Giuliani and Hillary—and getting heavy-handed media support in so doing—the 2008 presidential campaign may present a very real opportunity for an independent candidate— supported by key elements within the ruling elite—to win.

As a consequence, many Americans, fed up with the fraud of the "Republican vs. Democrat" charade that is played out every four years, could end up supporting Bloomberg. You have been warned.

A journalist specializing in media critique, **Michael Collins Piper** is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem***, ***The Judas Goats***, and ***Dirty Secrets***, all available from America First Books and First Amendment Books: 1-888-699-NEWS. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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